

SOC 450: SOCIAL INEQUALITY

Spring 2022: January 12th – May 12th, 2022

Instructor and Contact Information

Instructor: Rina James
Pronouns: they/them/theirs (Not sure what this means? Just ask, I'm happy to explain.)
Email: rinajames@email.arizona.edu
Office: Social Sciences Bldg., Room 412
Office hours: by appointment.

Description of Course

This course introduces students to social science perspectives on social inequality, with an emphasis on class inequality and its intersections with race and gender. We will begin by reviewing common narratives regarding social inequalities, and then proceed to review how social scientists think about inequality, and what empirical evidence reveals about social inequalities in the United States.

Course Prerequisites or Co-requisites

None.

Course Format and Teaching Methods

This course is fully web-based. All readings, assignments, and class discussions will be completed through the D2L course site. The weekly assignments include reading quizzes and discussion board participation. The D2L 'Announcements' page will be used to communicate any important course information throughout the semester. A specific outline of the activities you are expected to complete each week is included in the course schedule. Students are responsible for managing their time and technology to ensure work is completed on time. No late work will be accepted for 'internet problems' unless the issue is caused by a U of A network outage or D2L-wide issues; I recommend submitting work early to avoid unforeseen technology issues. Please note that all due dates/times reflect the local time here in Tucson.

Questions regarding the course should be posted on the D2L Discussion board called "Ask the Instructor." This ensures that answers to questions regarding assignments, course policies, and D2L navigation are available to all students. It also allows students to receive assistance from their peers in addition to the instructor. Be sure to check the syllabus before posting questions, and do not email questions about the course to the instructor. Emails regarding personal issues, however, can be sent to rinajames@email.arizona.edu. You can expect a response within 24 hours during the week—I may not respond to student emails on the weekends, so please ensure any urgent emails are sent by 4pm Friday, so they may be addressed prior to that. Otherwise, you may not receive a response before Monday morning.

Course Objectives

By the end of the course students are expected to be able to:

- Identify how social science perspectives on inequality compare to cultural myths/narratives surrounding inequality
- Define 'inequality' and 'mobility' and articulate the relationship between the two concepts
- Outline sociological explanations for inequality
- Describe how economic inequality intersects with other forms of inequality, such as race and gender

Expected Learning Outcomes

Knowledge of how to think critically about social issues in contemporary society: Upon completion of this course students will be able to demonstrate critical thinking skills, complex reasoning, and written communication skills.

Knowledge of social inequality Upon completion of this course students will be able to demonstrate knowledge of social inequalities in contemporary societies based on class, gender and race. Students will also demonstrate knowledge about how to critically evaluate arguments about and solutions to inequality in society.

Knowledge of social institutions: Upon completion of this course students will be able to demonstrate knowledge of the key social institutions in sociology (the family, education, work/economy) and their relationship to inequality.

Required Texts and Readings

All materials required for the course will be available on the D2L course page, or through the University of Arizona library's online collection. Content will include journal articles and book chapters, as well as short videos.

Absence and Class Participation Policy

Participation in the course is vital to student success, and students are expected to regularly attend class. However, **if you anticipate being unable to attend class or meet assignment deadlines due to illness or other personal circumstances, please contact the instructor, preferably in advance if possible.** If you are experiencing unexpected barriers to your success in your courses, the Dean of Students Office is a central support resource for all students and may be helpful. The Dean of Students Office is located in the Robert L. Nugent Building, room 100, or call 520-621-7057.

The UA's policy concerning Class Attendance, Participation, and Administrative Drops is available at:

<http://catalog.arizona.edu/policy/class-attendance-participation-and-administrative-drop>

The UA policy regarding absences for any sincerely held religious belief, observance or practice will be accommodated where reasonable, <http://policy.arizona.edu/human-resources/religious-accommodation-policy>.

Absences pre-approved by the UA Dean of Students (or Dean Designee) will be honored. See:

<https://deanofstudents.arizona.edu/absences>

Makeup Policy for Students Who Register Late

Students who register after the course start date must make up all assignments within **one week** of enrolling in the course.

Assignments and Grading

Weekly Quizzes (30%): Each week (excluding Spring Break in Week 9), you will take a short, five-question quiz that covers the weeks readings (except for Week 1, where the quiz will cover the syllabus). Quizzes will be administered through the 'Quiz' section on the D2L course site, and are **due Sundays by 11:59pm**. Your single lowest quiz score will be dropped from your final grade.

Discussion posts (30%): A specific prompt for your post will be provided at the beginning of each week, asking you to reflect or build on the concepts presented in that week's materials. Tasks may include answering a specific discussion question (for example, asking you to apply concepts to your own life, or compare/contrast author's arguments), or review short outside materials and providing a brief summary of how they relate to the class. Discussion posts should be 1 – 2 paragraphs and engage substantively with the material. Similarly, responses must also be substantive, raising a question, critiquing, or expanding on a classmate's post. Cursory comments such as "this is a good point," or "I agree/disagree" will not receive credit. Discussion posts and responses must be submitted for 14 of the 17 weeks of the course, meaning you may miss up to two of these without penalty, at your discretion. **Posts are due Sundays at 11:59pm.**

Essays (35%): Every week starting in Week 2 (and excluding Spring Break in Week 9), an essay prompt related to the week's course content will be posted on the Content page for that week. Students must submit written essays for **three** of the fifteen prompts. Which prompts you choose to address are up to you, based on your own interests or schedule. If you choose to write on an essay prompt, the essay is due **Sunday by 11:59pm of the following week**. So, if you choose to write on the essay prompt from Week 2, it will be due Sunday of Week 3. These deadlines are outlined in the course schedule. Please submit your essay into the dropbox for the week the essay was assigned, not the week it was due (i.e., if the essay prompt was assigned for Week 3, submit it to the Week 3 dropbox, even though it is due in Week 4). **You must submit at least one essay by the end of Week 8 (by 11:59pm on March 6th), and a second by the end of Week 13 (by 11:59pm on April 10th). Your third essay must be submitted by the final week of the course (5/08 by 11:59 pm).** This is simply to ensure you do not reach the last few weeks of the semester with three essays to write; you are, of course, welcome to get them all out of the way early.

Essays should be 750-1000 words (this is ~2-3 pages, double-spaced), and include properly formatted citations. A guide on how to ensure proper citations is included under 'Course Content' on D2L. You also have the option to revise one (1)

essay prompt to improve your score, at your discretion.

Final Reflection (5%): In addition to the final project, students will write at least 750 words about the five most important things you learned in this course. Each item should be numbered clearly, and emphasize substantive knowledge (i.e. conceptual or empirical knowledge, not study skills or similar). This assignment is pass/fail, and will be evaluated based on whether what you discuss was part of the course, was accurately described based on course materials, was described in detail (i.e., you should write paragraphs rather than bullet points), and was at least 750 words. **Final Reflection papers should be submitted through D2L by 11:59pm on Wednesday, May 11th.**

In addition to the above assignments, you can earn three extra credit points by proving you read the syllabus and emailing me a picture of a cat. It doesn't have to be your cat, but if it is then I'd also like to know their name. If you don't like cats, you can pick a different animal. Or even a plant. I'm not picky.

Final Examination or Project

There is no stand-alone final exam or assignment for this course. For general final exam regulations and information, see <https://www.registrar.arizona.edu/courses/final-examination-regulations-and-information>, and Final Exam Schedule, <http://www.registrar.arizona.edu/schedules/finals.htm>.

Late Work Policy

I understand that students increasingly have obligations outside of coursework. **In an effort to build flexibility into the course, each student is allotted two late work passes.** You may use these for a free 48-hour extension on any assignment, entirely at your discretion. You do not need to explain the circumstances (unless you really want to)—you can simply send an email indicating that you would like to use one of your late work passes and specifying which assignment you are using the extension for.

Given the ongoing pandemic, I also aim to be flexible for students affected by illness during the semester; if you think you may need more accommodations than an extension on a single assignment, please reach out as soon as you are able to make arrangements with the instructor.

Grading Scale and Policies

University policy regarding grades and grading systems is available at <http://catalog.arizona.edu/policy/grades-and-grading-system>

Grade distribution for this course:

A: 90-100

B: 80-89

C: 70-79

D: 60-69

F: <60

Requests for incomplete (I) or withdrawal (W) must be made in accordance with University policies, which are available at <http://catalog.arizona.edu/policy/grades-and-grading-system#incomplete> and <http://catalog.arizona.edu/policy/grades-and-grading-system#Withdrawal> respectively.

Dispute of Grade Policy Students with concerns regarding an assignment grade should contact the instructor within two days of the assignment grade being posted. Students are responsible for regularly reviewing the feedback on their assignments.

Honors Credit

Students wishing to contract this course for Honors Credit should email me to set up an appointment to discuss the terms of the contract. Information on Honors Contracts can be found at <https://www.honors.arizona.edu/honors-contracts>.

Course Schedule

Please look over the following schedule carefully so that you can plan your work accordingly. Also check the course website regularly for announcements. You must keep up with any changes in the schedule, which will be announced on D2L. **Please note that all assignments are due on Sundays at 11:59pm.**

WEEK 1: 1/12 – 1/16 – Course Introduction
Carefully read course syllabus and view video intro
Week 1 discussion posts and syllabus quiz due 1/16 by 11:59 pm
WEEK TWO: 1/17 – 1/23 – Background
<p>Read: McNamee, Stephen J. and Robert K. Miller, Jr. 2004. "The Meritocracy Myth." <i>Sociation Today</i> 2(1).</p> <p>Grusky, David. 2018. "The Stories About Inequality That We Love to Tell." Ch. 1 in <i>The Inequality Reader</i>, 2nd edition, Edited by David B. Grusky and Szonja Szelenyi. New York: Routledge.</p> <p>Reading total: 37 pages</p> <p>Week 2 discussion posts and reading quiz due 1/23 by 11:59 pm</p>
WEEK THREE: 1/24 – 1/30 – The Structure of Inequality
<p>Read: Marx, Karl. 2018. "Classes in Capitalism and Pre-Capitalism." Pp. 131-141 in <i>Social Stratification: Class, Race, and Gender in Sociological Perspective</i>, 4th edition, Edited by David B. Grusky. Routledge: New York.</p> <p>Weber, Max. 2011. "Status Groups and Classes." Pp. 175-178 in <i>Social Stratification: Class, Race, and Gender in Sociological Perspective</i>, 4th edition, Edited by David B. Grusky. New York: Routledge.</p> <p>Weeden, Kim A., and David B. Grusky. 2012. "The Three Worlds of Inequality." <i>American Journal of Sociology</i> 117(6):1723–85. (Only read pages 1723-1758; no need to review the Appendix.)</p> <p>Reading total: 49 pages</p> <p>Week 2 Essay due 1/30 by 11:59 pm (if submitting)</p> <p>Week 3 discussion posts and reading quiz due 1/30 by 11:59 pm</p>
WEEK FOUR: 1/31 – 2/06 - The Structure of Inequality, cont.
<p>Read: Wright, Erik Olin. 2000. "Class Counts." Pp. 1–34 in <i>Class Counts</i>. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.</p> <p>Domhoff, G. William. 2005. "The Class-Domination Theory of Power." <i>Who Rules America?</i> Available online at: https://whorulesamerica.ucsc.edu/power/class_domination.html</p> <p>Reading total: ~44 pages</p> <p>Week 3 Essay due 2/06 by 11:59 pm (if submitting)</p> <p>Week 4 discussion posts and reading quiz due 2/06 by 11:59 pm</p>
WEEK FIVE: 2/7 – 2/13 – Social Mobility
<p>Read: Bowles, Samuel, et al. 2008. Pp. 1-7 of "Introduction" in <i>Unequal Chances: Family Background and Economic Success</i>. Princeton: Princeton University Press.</p>

<p>Erikson, Robert, and John H. Goldthorpe. 2002. "Intergenerational Inequality: A Sociological Perspective." <i>Journal of Economic Perspectives</i> 16(3):31–44.</p> <p>Beller, Emily, and Michael Hout. 2006. "Intergenerational Social Mobility: The United States in Comparative Perspective." <i>The Future of Children</i> 16(2):19–36.</p> <p>Reading total: 37 pages</p> <p>Week 4 Essay due 2/13 by 11:59 pm (if submitting) Week 5 discussion posts and reading quiz due 2/13 by 11:59 pm</p>
WEEK SIX: 2/14 – 2/20 – Explanations for Inequality
<p>Read: Tumin, Melvin M. 1953. "Some Principles of Stratification: A Critical Analysis." <i>American Sociological Review</i> 18(4):387-394.</p> <p>Fischer, Claude S., Michael Hout, Martín Sánchez Jankowski, Samuel R. Lucas, Ann Swidler, and Kim Voss. 1996. "Why Inequality?" Chapter 1 in <i>Inequality by Design: Cracking the Bell Curve Myth</i>. Princeton: Princeton University Press.</p> <p>Western, Bruce, and Jake Rosenfeld. 2011. "Unions, Norms, and the Rise in U.S. Wage Inequality." <i>American Sociological Review</i> 76(4):513–37.</p> <p>Reading total: 50 pages</p> <p>Week 5 Essay due 2/20 by 11:59 pm (if submitting) Week 6 discussion posts and reading quiz due 2/20 by 11:59 pm</p>
WEEK SEVEN: 2/21 – 2/27 – Poverty and the Underclass
<p>Read: Wilson, William Julius. 1999. "When Work Disappears: New Implications for Race and Urban Poverty in the Global Economy." <i>Ethnic and Racial Studies</i> 22(3):479–99.</p> <p>Duncan, Cynthia M., and Nita Lamborghini. 1994. "Poverty and Social Context in Remote Rural Communities." <i>Rural Sociology</i> 59(3):437–61.</p> <p>Reading total: 44 pages</p> <p>Week 6 Essay due 2/27 by 11:59 pm (if submitting) Week 7 discussion posts and reading quiz due 2/27 by 11:59 pm</p>
WEEK EIGHT: 2/28 – 3/06 – Race and Social Structure
<p>Read: Bonilla-Silva, Eduardo. 1997. "Rethinking Racism: Toward a Structural Interpretation." <i>American Sociological Review</i> 62(3):465–80.</p> <p>Loveman, Mara. 1999. "Is 'Race' Essential?" <i>American Sociological Review</i> 64(6):891-898.</p> <p>Bonilla-Silva, Eduardo. 1999. "The Essential Social Fact of Race." <i>American Sociological Review</i> 64(6):899-906.</p> <p>Reading total: 29 pages</p> <p>Week 7 Essay due 3/06 by 11:59 pm (if submitting). Remember you must submit at least ONE essay by this date. Week 8 discussion posts and reading quiz due 3/06 by 11:59 pm</p>
WEEK NINE: 3/07 – 3/13 – Spring Break

No readings.

No assignments due this week. If writing on the Week 8 essay prompt, enjoy some extra time to work on it.

WEEK TEN: 3/14 – 3/20 – Race and Inequality

Read: Massey, Douglas S. 1990. "American Apartheid: Segregation and the Making of the Underclass." *American Journal of Sociology* 96(2):329–57. (Read only pages 329-354; no need to review the Appendix.)

Oliver, Melvin L. and Thomas M. Shapiro. "Black wealth/white wealth: A new perspective on racial inequality." Pp. 269-303 in *The Inequality Reader*. New York: Routledge.

Reading total: 58 pages

Week 8 Essay due 3/20 by 11:59 pm (if submitting)

Week 10 discussion posts and reading quiz due 3/20 by 11:59 pm

WEEK ELEVEN: 3/21 – 3/27 – Race and Inequality, cont.

Read: Pager, Devah, and Bruce Western. 2009. "Discrimination in a Low-Wage Labor Market: A Field Experiment." *American Sociological Review* 74:777–99.

Feagin, Joe R. 1991. "The Continuing Significance of Race: Antiblack Discrimination in Public Places." *American Sociological Review* 56(1):101–16.

Reading total: 37 pages

Week 10 Essay due 3/27 by 11:59 pm (if submitting)

Week 11 discussion posts and reading quiz due 3/27 by 11:59 pm

WEEK TWELVE: 3/28 – 4/03 – Gender and Inequality

Read: England, Paula. 2010. "The Gender Revolution: Uneven and Stalled." *Gender & Society* 24(2):149–66.

Budig, Michelle J. 2002. "Male Advantage and the Gender Composition of Jobs: Who Rides the Glass Escalator?" *Social Problems* 49(2):258–77.

Reading total: 36 pages

Week 11 Essay due 4/03 by 11:59 pm (if submitting)

Week 12 discussion posts and reading quiz due 4/03 by 11:59 pm

WEEK THIRTEEN: 4/04 – 4/10 – Gender and Inequality, cont.

Read: Goldin, Claudia. 2006. "The Quiet Revolution That Transformed Women's Employment, Education, and Family." *American Economic Review* 96(2):1–21.

Budig, Michelle J., and Paula England. 2001. "The Wage Penalty for Motherhood." *American Sociological Review* 66(2):204–225.

Reading total: 41 pages

Week 12 Essay due 4/10 by 11:59 pm (if submitting). Remember you must submit at least TWO essays total by this date.

Week 13 discussion posts and reading quiz due 4/10 by 11:59 pm

<p>WEEK FOURTEEN: 4/11 – 4/17 – Families and Childhood</p> <p>Read: Lareau, Annette. 2002. "Invisible Inequality: Social Class and Childrearing in Black Families and White Families." <i>American Sociological Review</i> 67(5):747-776. 31</p> <p>Biblarz, Timothy J., and Adrian E. Raftery. 1999. "Family Structure, Educational Attainment, and Socioeconomic Success: Rethinking the 'Pathology of Matriarchy.'" <i>American Journal of Sociology</i> 105(2):321–65. (Read pages 321-357; no need to review the Appendix.)</p> <p>Reading total: 67 pages (The second article assigned here has a number of large tables that inflate the page count.)</p> <p>Week 13 Essay due 4/17 by 11:59 pm (if submitting) Week 14 discussion posts and reading quiz due 4/17 by 11:59 pm</p>
<p>WEEK FIFTEEN: 4/18 – 4/24 – Culture</p> <p>Read: Lizardo, Omar. 2010. "Culture and Stratification." Pp. 305–15 in <i>Handbook of Cultural Sociology</i>. London: Routledge.</p> <p>Rivera, Lauren A. 2012. "Hiring as Cultural Matching: The Case of Elite Professional Service Firms." <i>American Sociological Review</i> 77(6):999–1022+</p> <p>Reading total: 33 pages</p> <p>Week 14 Essay due 4/24 by 11:59 pm (if submitting) Week 15 discussion posts and reading quiz due 4/24 by 11:59 pm</p>
<p>WEEK SIXTEEN: 4/25 – 5/01 – Education</p> <p>Read: Reardon, Sean F. 2012. "The Widening Academic Achievement Gap Between the Rich and the Poor." <i>Community Investments</i> 24(2):19–39.</p> <p>Hochschild, Jennifer L. 2003. "Social Class in Public Schools." <i>Journal of Social Issues</i> 59(4):821–40.</p> <p>Reading total: 39 pages</p> <p>Week 15 Essay due 5/01 by 11:59 pm (if submitting) Week 16 discussion posts and reading quiz due 5/01 by 11:59 pm</p>
<p>WEEK SEVENTEEN: 5/02 – 5/08 – Where Do We Go from Here?</p> <p>Read: Frank, Robert H. 2018. "The pragmatic case for reducing income inequality." Pp. 730-734 in <i>The Inequality Reader</i>. New York: Routledge.</p> <p>Reading total: 4 pages</p> <p>Week 16 Essay due 5/08 by 11:59 pm. You need to have a total of THREE essays submitted by this date.</p>
<p>FINALS: 5/06 – 5/12</p> <p>Catch up on any remaining work if needed.</p> <p>Final Refection due 05/11 by 11:59pm</p>

Classroom Behavior Policy

To foster a positive learning environment, students and instructors have a shared responsibility. We want a safe,

welcoming, and inclusive environment where all of us feel comfortable with each other and where we can challenge ourselves to succeed. To that end, our focus is on the tasks at hand and not on extraneous activities (e.g., texting, chatting, reading a newspaper, making phone calls, web surfing, etc.). Additionally, the online discussions for the course should remain respectful and professional.

Threatening Behavior Policy

The UA Threatening Behavior by Students Policy prohibits threats of physical harm to any member of the University community, including to oneself. See <http://policy.arizona.edu/education-and-student-affairs/threatening-behavior-students>.

Accessibility and Accommodations

At the University of Arizona, we strive to make learning experiences as accessible as possible. If you anticipate or experience barriers based on disability or pregnancy, please contact the Disability Resource Center (520-621-3268, <https://drc.arizona.edu/>) to establish reasonable accommodations.

Code of Academic Integrity

Students are encouraged to share intellectual views and discuss freely the principles and applications of course materials. However, graded work/exercises must be the product of independent effort unless otherwise instructed. Students are expected to adhere to the UA Code of Academic Integrity as described in the UA General Catalog. See: <http://deanofstudents.arizona.edu/academic-integrity/students/academic-integrity>.

The University Libraries have some excellent tips for avoiding plagiarism, available at <http://new.library.arizona.edu/research/citing/plagiarism>.

Selling class notes and/or other course materials to other students or to a third party for resale is not permitted without the instructor's express written consent. Violations to this and other course rules are subject to the Code of Academic Integrity and may result in course sanctions. Additionally, students who use D2L or UA e-mail to sell or buy these copyrighted materials are subject to Code of Conduct Violations for misuse of student e-mail addresses. This conduct may also constitute copyright infringement.

UA Nondiscrimination and Anti-harassment Policy

The University is committed to creating and maintaining an environment free of discrimination; see <http://policy.arizona.edu/human-resources/nondiscrimination-and-anti-harassment-policy>

Our classroom is a place where everyone is encouraged to express well-formed opinions and their reasons for those opinions. We also want to create a tolerant and open environment where such opinions can be expressed without resorting to bullying or discrimination of others.

Additional Resources for Students

UA Academic policies and procedures are available at <http://catalog.arizona.edu/policies>
Student Assistance and Advocacy information is available at <http://deanofstudents.arizona.edu/student-assistance/students/student-assistance>

Confidentiality of Student Records

<http://www.registrar.arizona.edu/personal-information/family-educational-rights-and-privacy-act-1974-ferpa?topic=ferpa>

Financial Support

The Richard H. Tyler Student Emergency Fund can support students experiencing temporary financial hardships. This appears to apply to graduate students and undergraduate students. Apply for funds from: https://uarizona.co1.qualtrics.com/jfe/form/SV_1TA1XvxC1kgrN1b

Food Support

Research shows that a large percentage of undergraduates face housing and/or food insecurity and it is reasonable to

believe numbers have worsened during the current crisis. In addition to Pima County resources, the campus has a food pantry to help reduce food insecurity: <https://campuspantry.arizona.edu/>

Academic advising (undergrads)

If you have questions about your academic progress this semester, or your chosen degree program, advisors at the Advising Resource Center can guide you toward university resources to help you succeed.

Life challenges (undergrads)

If you are experiencing unexpected barriers to your success in your courses, the Dean of Students Office is a central support resource for all students. Call 520-621-2057 or email DOS-deanofstudents@email.arizona.edu.

Physical and mental-health challenges

Recent surveys show that the current crisis is taking a toll on many people's mental and/or physical health, with a really large number of people who are college-aged having thought about suicide in the last 30 days. If you are facing physical or mental health challenges this semester, Campus Health offers medical and mental health care. For medical appointments, call (520-621-9202. For After Hours care, call (520) 570-7898. For the Counseling & Psych Services (CAPS) 24/7 hotline, call (520) 621-3334. If you or someone you know is in crisis, the National Suicide Prevention Hotline has English and Spanish speakers ready to talk 24/7 at: 1-800-273-8255

Finally, please notify the professor if your needs are not met with these resources and you are comfortable in doing so. This will enable them to access additional resources if available.

Subject to Change Statement

Information contained in the course syllabus, other than the grade and absence policy, may be subject to change with advance notice, as deemed appropriate by the instructor.